

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
/063 W

-----180724Z 075562 /13

R 180540Z JAN 77
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4041
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY SEOUL

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 0114

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR IZ KN
SUBJECT: TENSION BETWEEN NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMMANDS

SUMMARY: PROTOCOL SNAFUS OVER VISIT BY NORTH KOREAN
DELEGATION FURTHER EXACERBATE TENSION BETWEEN BAATH PARTY
NATIONAL COMMAND AND REGIONAL COMMAND AND MAY AFFECT IRAQI
POLICY MAKING ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES INCLUDING
TERRORISM. END SUMMARY.

1. JANUARY 16 VISIT TO IRAQ BY A NORTH KOREAN WORKERS' PARTY
DELEGATION, UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF COMRADE PAK
SUNG CHUL, A MEMBER OF THE POLITBUREAU
OF THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND PRIME MINISTER
OF THE DPRK, HAS ADDED FURTHER TO THE TENSION BETWEEN
THE NATIONAL COMMAND AND THE REGIONAL COMMAND. THE NORTH
KOREAN AMBASSADOR IN BAGHDAD MADE THE MISTAKE OF
REQUESTING APPROVAL FOR THE VISIT FROM THE NATIONAL COMMAND
WITHOUT NOTIFYING THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OR THE REGIONAL
COMMAND. FOREIGN MINISTRY FIRST HEARD ABOUT VISIT WHEN
THE SECRETARY OF SHIBLI AL-AYSAMI, THE ASSISTANT SECRE-
TARY GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL COMMAND, TELEPHONED THE FOREIGN
MINISTER'S SECRETARY AND RELAYED A REQUEST FROM THE
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NATIONAL COMMAND THAT PROPER ARRANGEMENTS BE MADE BY THE
GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ TO RECEIVE THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION.
FOREIGN MINISTER HAMMADI AND SADDAM HUSSEIN REACTED TO
THESE PROTOCOL BLUNDERS BY REFUSING TO SEND ANY GOI OFFICIAL,
APART FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR OF PROTOCOL,
TO THE AIRPORT TO MEET THE NORTH KOREAN PRIME
MINISTER. THE GOI ALSO BOYCOTTED THE DINNER GIVEN BY THE

NATIONAL COMMAND FOR THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION AND REFUSED TO PASS THE USUAL INVITATIONS TO THE BAGHDAD DIPLOMATIC CORPS. UPON THEIR ARRIVAL AT THE AIRPORT, THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION ADDED FUEL TO THE FIRE BY ATTEMPTING TO DISTRIBUTE A PRESS RELEASE, ALL COPIES OF WHICH WERE PROMPTLY SEIZED BY THE IRAQI AUTHORITIES. THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL REFUSED TO AUTHORIZE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRESS RELEASE UNTIL IT HAD BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCED THAT THE DELEGATION HAD BEEN INVITED BY THE GOI AS WELL AS BY THE ARAB BAATH SOCIALIST PARTY. THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION IS STILL IN BAGHDAD BUT HAS NOT YET MET WITH EITHER SADDAM HUSSEIN OR PRESIDENT BAKR. NEWSPAPER PHOTOS SHOW THE DELEGATION IN SESSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COMMAND UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF SHIBLI AL-AYSAMI.

2. THE PROTOCOL SNAFUS WITH THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION HIGHLIGHT THE GROWING CLEAVAGE BETWEEN THE REGIONAL COMMAND DOMINATED BY SADDAM HUSSEIN AND THE NATIONAL COMMAND WHICH IS LARGELY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF SYRIAN EXILES. A USUALLY WELL INFORMED USINT SOURCE TOLD US THAT INSTRUCTIONS HAVE NOW GONE OUT TO ALL OF IRAQ'S DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS NOT TO RESPOND TO MESSAGES FROM THE NATIONAL COMMAND UNLESS THEY ARE SENT THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. IN THE PAST, NATIONAL COMMAND OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN IN THE PRACTICE OF ISSUING INSTRUCTIONS AND REQUESTING INFORMATION FROM IRAQ'S OVERSEAS MISSIONS WITHOUT ANY CLEARANCE WITH THE PROPER OFFICES

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OF THE GOI. SOURCE EXPECTED THAT CONTACTS BETWEEN THE NATIONAL COMMAND AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN IRAW WOULD ALSO BE "REGULARIZED". ACCORDING TO SOURCE, MATTER WAS BROUGHT TO A HEAD BY THE NATIONAL COMMAND ACTION IN ORDERING THE GOI PASSPORT OFFICE TO ISSUE A PASSPORT TO ABU DAUD WITHOUT ANY CLEARANCE WITH POLICY LEVELS OF THE REGIONAL COMMAND OR THE GOI. SOURCE ALSO BELIEVES THAT SOME OF IRAQ'S MORE EMBARRASSING INVOLVEMENTS IN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL COMMAND WITHOUT OTHER HIGH LEVEL CLEARANCE IN BAGHDAD. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, SADDAM HUSSEIN HAS DECIDED THAT IRAQ'S REPUTATION HAS SUFFERED ENOUGH FROM THESE INCIDENTS AND HE IS NOW DETERMINED TO BRING THE NATIONAL COMMAND UNDER HIS CONTROL. SOURCE ADMITTED THAT THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY RULE OUT ALL COVERT ACTIVITIES ABROAD, BUT IN FUTURE SUCH UNDERTAKINGS WILL BE CAREFULLY REVIEWED IN ADVANCE IN TERMS OF IRAQ'S OVERALL POLITIEL OBJECTIVES AND WILL BE HANDLED BY THE PROFESSIONALS IN THE MUKHABARAT. SOURCE ALSO SAID THAT GOI IS NOW TIGHTENING ITS CONTROL OVWR PALESTINIAN TRAINING

CAMPS SO AS TO PREVENT FUTURE EMBARRASSMENT BY ZEALOUS
"BLACK JUNE AMATEURS.

3. COMMENT: IN ADDITION TO HIS CONCERN OVER IRAQ'S
IMAGE ABROAD, SADDAM HUSSEIN IS PROBABLY ANXIOUS TO
REDUCE THE NULIONAL COMMAND'S POWER TO PRE-EMPT HIS
FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS BY PUBLCLY EXPOUSING
IDEOLOGICALLY PURE BUT PRAGMATICALLY IMPRACTICAL POSITIONS
BEFORE GOI HAS HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Channel Indicators: n/a
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770018-0009
Format: TEL
From: BAGHDAD
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Event:
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3576684
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TENSION BETWEEN NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMMANDS SUMMARY: PROTOCOL SNAFUS OVER VISIT BY NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION FURTHER EXACERBATE TENSION BETWEEN BAAT
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, IZ, KN, BAATH PARTY, (PAK SUNG CHUL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4e33dbd5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009